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Selected Poems: Thought Unthought; The Custodians; Blood is Blood Until It's Yours

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Cambodian, Laotian,
and Vietnamese
Americans (NAFEA)

Selected Poems

by
Kevin Minh Allen

Thought Unthought

Two women walk up to my tiny, teeming body (trip wire snipped)
and take me from hands unseen (empty cargo bay).

Young woman kisses the top of my head and lights a candle.
Older woman whispers into my ear and unfolds her arms to let me lie in the arms of another.

I disappear. Instantaneous. A son.

The Custodians

Uncle...Brother, could you come by with your pink boa feather duster and clear away these
muddy mounds of soldiers, now dried up and crumbling, blowing into the stinging eyes of their
parents?

Auntie...Sister, excuse me for walking in on you replacing empty toilet paper rolls in the
bathroom stalls. "It is our sincerest regret", she mouthed, "that we could not keep you over there
with us. But, as you can see, we are here for you now. Pardon me, I'll leave you alone to
commune with The Lost Ones."



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The water in the sink rises to its cleaned edge, gurgles and then swallows the thought of me stuck in the hole of a cinnamon-rolled donut, struggling against the pull of the whirl. From out of nowhere a 747 flies overhead and dangles a cable from its belly for me to grab onto. Grab hold! Grab on! Come in!

“Patience is a tissue,” I overhear a muffled voice say and I crack the door open to peek out. A hefty cart, loaded with paper towels, garbage bags, spray bottles and bright yellow rubber gloves rumbles right past my nose. The two custodians look over their shoulders, grin and wave at me.

Brother drags a large wet vac behind him and Sister holds open the door to the elevator lobby. She takes one last look around the room, hands on her hips, and then disappears through the doorway. She remarks, loudly, just before the elevator doors close, how one of my earlobes seems to have grown longer than the other.

Blood is Blood, Until It’s Yours

wake the mother

blame the father

{a sheen of dust rings the bottom of the bowls, tipsy on shelves slowly disintegrating}

red light blinks

red light sweats

{brassiere smaller than the other women’s, fuller than usual with the color of money}

grenade in the jeep

mortar in the square

{deliver him into other hands free of our misdeeds, if the boy is to survive}

named him

framed him

{the orphanage does not allow visitors, grandmother; go home and wait for the war to end}

green passport

blue passport

{quietly erase yourself for the benefit of those who fought for the freedom to forget}

About the Author



Kevin Minh Allen was born Nguyễn Đức Minh on December 5, 1973 near Sài Gòn, Vietnam to a Vietnamese mother and American father who remain unknown to him. He was adopted by a couple from Rochester, NY and grew up in Webster, NY with his two younger sisters. In 2000, he moved to Seattle, WA to pursue a life less ordinary. Kevin has had his poetry published in numerous print and online publications, such as Aileron, HazMat Literary Review, Chrysanthemum and, most recently, Eye To The Telescope.



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